

FRIENDS SOCIETY

1969 - 1995



Cheer - Up
Youth Club
Eye Donation
Sunday School
Blood Donation
Integrated Balwadi
Educational Sponsorship
Child Health Care Centre
Mother Health Care Centre
Income Generation Programme
Programme for University Youth

Public Reading Room and Library
Sheth Khushalchand Charitable Medical Centre

INVOLVE - 25

A special issue to commemorate the third reunion of past and present members

With Best Wishes From

PARLE (EXPORTS) LIMITED

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

As Friends Society celebrates its silver jubilee, one cannot help wondering if 25 years was not a long time for any organisation to be on the National map. Is it important that one's success be gauged by being a National Organisation? Many pessimists may feel that nothing is achieved unless the whole nation knows of you. They may also think that Friends Society has achieved nothing. It may seem (to many) that no Organisation can function effectively without professional staff and formal structure. In today's fast moving/changing times it is indeed unheard of to rely on volunteerism.

Yet we have seen and proved that Friends Society has survived 25 years and is still going strong. It was with remarkable foresight that the founders of Friends Society based the Organisation on awareness, social commitment and self development. The organisation is made up of students. It is through their involvement in Friends Society activities that the youth attain social and economic awareness. Through their activities in Friends Society programmes the students achieve self-development. Their experience helps them to analyse situations, take decisions, interact with government departments, businesses and also non-government organisations. They also learn to undertake various kinds of activities such as programme-planning, fund-raising, programme implementation, report writing, speech making, evaluation, etc.

Their experience in Friends Society makes them particularly sensitive to people and their problems.

I am very happy to have been associated with Friends Society, to see the positive impact on the lives of those students who were Friends Society volunteers, that too through their service to society.

In short, Friends Society has helped to create a better society. And those people who are no longer active in Friends Society will surely feel the satisfaction of having helped in this goal.

My message to the future Friends Society volunteers is to put life into your leadership activity and persuade youngsters to become volunteers so that they too can experience what self development through service is all about.

Mrs. Gowri Rajendran

MESSAGES

Laxmi Villas Palace,
Vadodara - 390 001.

23rd February, 1995.

I am happy to know that FRIENDS SOCIETY is celebrating its Silver Jubilee on 25th and 26th February, 1995. The Society is run by the students of Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. In the past twenty five years they have undertaken various social activities such as Blood Donation Camps, Child Health Care Centre, various activities for the Handicapped, a Non-profit medical store and a Baiwadi.

I convey my good wishes to FRIENDS SOCIETY for their constructive activities carried out so far and to be carried out in the years to come.

Ranjitsingh Gaekwad

PROF. VEENA R. MISTRY (Ph.D.)
Pro-Vice-Chancellor,
The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda.
VADODARA-390002.

18th February, 1995

I am indeed very happy to write this message for Friends Society which completes its Silver Jubilee. Twenty-five years is a long time for a voluntary organisation to have excelled in services that it has offered to community at large and student community in particular. From Youth Club activities, Sports for the Handicapped, Blood Donation Camps, Programmes for Future leaders, Mother and Child Health Care Centre to Self-Development through service, Friends Society has done commendable work. M.S. University of Baroda and Friends Society has had a very special and complementary relationship. FS as it is popularly called was conceived by concern for fostering leadership qualities in youth with concern and commitment to society.

I am sure that Friends Society will continue to do the excellent work as it has done in the past and endeavour to continue its meaningful and relevant contribution to society in general and to youth in particular.

With best wishes,

Veena R. Mistry

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FS OVER THE YEARS : THROUGH THE EYES OF INVOLVE

Hello Friends ! You all know me, for I have been bringing to you all the newsy tit-bits of Friends Society since... I guess...1971 ! It's been a long time, and much water has passed under the bridge of FS during the last 25 years. Let me unfold to you the story of Friends Society through my eyes; no, through my letters and words....from the time I was born in 1971 as a news letter of FS, then given a name INVOLVE when I was 3 years old in 1974, to my present youthful look of 24 years.

My story gives only glimpses of some of the varied dimensions of the development of FS, with examples quoted from the past issues of Involve. So here goes..

First, the Rapid Growth, then the Consolidation of Activities

The INVOLVE issues of the 1970s, which appeared regularly almost every month, reflect the excitement of the rapid expansion of FS in the first decade, and the immense enthusiasm and hard work of the members, as evident below.

1971 - *The much awaited X-ray plate project of FS was started without any formal function or fuss (typical of FS not to go for undue publicity). -*

Three members can do the job of thirty if all are sufficiently interested.

1972 - *Blood Donation camp at the Faculty of Commerce lasted for six and a half hours...234 eager donors donated blood !*

1973 - *The hospital service group plans to set up a Drug-cum-General Store-cum-Canteen at SSG hospital...Sheth Khushalchand Charitable Trust will donate Rs.35,000....our most challenging project so far.*

1974 - *For the beautification of the campus, the Campus Development Group has met the Municipal Corporation for filling up the campus...*

and after two years,

1976 - *FS wears a new look : 300 truck loads of garbage and sand have filled up the ditch surrounding the Petit Library building...NSS and FS volunteers levelled the ground...our artist members have made a colourful signboard.*

The 1980s was a period of introspection and consolidation of activities, after the first reunion of past and present members, for which a special Involve issue was brought out.

1980 - *In the first re-union of past and present members, it was decided to consolidate, rather than expand, our programs. New avenues for fund-raising were explored, wherein members and well wishers regularly contribute modest amounts to FS.*

A look at the profile of members - which faculties they come from (mostly Medicine, Technology and Engineering, Home Science), why do they join FS (to help others and develop their personalities), are they hostelites or day scholars (both; increasingly the latter); how has FS benefitted them (more self confidence, organisational abilities, insight into the problems of handicapped) and, which are the popular programs (those for the handicapped, PFL, Blood Donation).

1983 - *Areas of Collaborative Effort...collaboration with other agencies was a natural solution to overcome some of the difficulties faced in initiating or developing some FS projects.*

Self Development Through Service

This motto of FS comes to life in many issues of INVOLVE which describe various programmes like

- talks by eminent people on varied topics like 'Problems of Unemployed Youth', 'Educational Hijacking-Brain Drain', 'Medico-Legal Aspects of the Abortion Law', and so many others;
- talks given by FS members themselves on the fields of their own specialization which are as diverse as geology, surgery and nutrition;
- Leadership development and program planning camps for members at Samiala and Bharuch.
- timeless, inspiring articles reproduced from the Reader's Digest: You are tougher than you think; Know the Right Moment... and many others

A 1982 issue of INVOLVE had a lead article entitled 'Self Development Through Service' which described how self development of members takes place in FS. It presented the FS formula :

Management Skills X Emotional Maturity = Self Development.

FS has since the beginning, emphasized that as most members are student volunteers, their studies come first. In fact, several of the very active volunteers have also fared well on the academic front, and have won Friend of the Year Awards

1976 - Address of the Chairperson at the general body meeting of the year 1976-77 : I sincerely congratulate all of you who have done well in the examinations... your first duty is towards your studies... yet university education would be incomplete if it did not promote all round development.

Awards and Honours

In FS, we believe in work for the sake of work. FS shuns undue publicity. Yet, it is true that outstanding work never fails to get noticed; such as the truly remarkable achievements of the Blood Donation group ("Draculas !") in the 1970s and early 1980s.

1976 - FS bags Asha Parekh trophy for securing first position among all voluntary organizations in Gujarat involved in Blood Donation programs (FS won this trophy 3 times)

1977 - The Federation of Gujarat Mills and Industries award goes to FS for mobilizing youth for community service.

1978 - The Gujarat Red Cross Blood Donation Cup received by FS for its outstanding contribution to the voluntary blood donation movement outside Ahmedabad city.

The 'F' of Friends Society also stands for Fun

One reason why most members have such pleasant memories of FS is that their involvement in activities do not seem like 'work' at all; in fact in most instances there is a sense of joy among members as they work in groups. For example, fish-ponds - a regular feature of most FS annual days - tickled FS members to laughter as they were read out. Outdoor trips and entertainment programs with handicapped children and school children as well as the outstation leadership camps at Samiala and Bharuch, are extremely enjoyable experiences.

1975 - For our much awaited Friends Day, please think of Fish-ponds and place them in the box.

1979 - At the Medico Fun Fair, FS stalls won first prize for eatables (hot soup and sandwiches) and second prize for decoration.

FS loses again: the FS cricket team kept up its record of losing against the certified school, by unfortunately, only one wicket.

Once A Friend Always A Friend

Although outgoing members (usually in the final year of their studies) are bid farewell at the Friends Day, in reality, once a friend is always a friend at FS. Even when they leave Baroda, past members keep in touch through letters, through INVOLVE and often write about how they have involved themselves in helping others wherever they are.

1973 - *We have received a donation of 20 US \$ from Mr. K. Sudarshanrao, who was with the AFF group and at present studying in USA. This donation is out of his first pay*

1979 - *I am in Daar-e-salaam... thanks to FS, I go once a week to the Yombo Institute and help the elderly and the physically handicapped with their shopping and cheer them up.*

1985 - *The Gujarat Jaycees have selected me as "The Outstanding Young Person of Gujarat for 1984" in recognition of my distinctions and achievements... I cannot forget the valued contribution of my alma-mater Friends Society in whatever I have achieved... I wish to place on record my sincere thanks and gratitude to you all and to Friends Society.*

Where Do We Go from Here ?

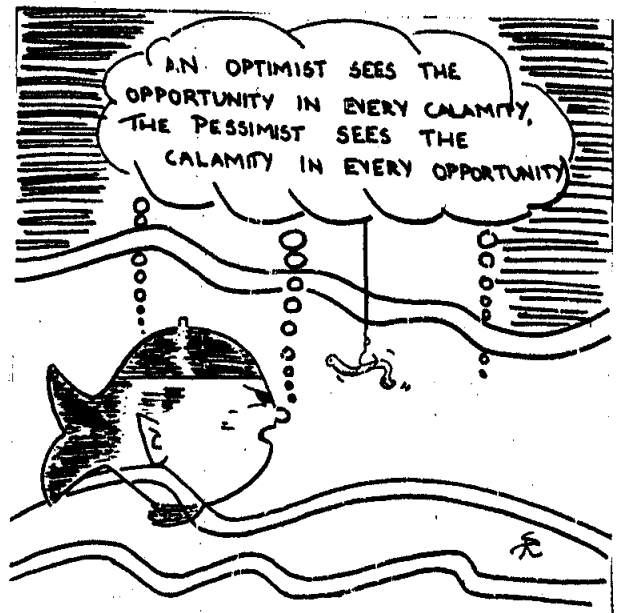
Wasn't the FS journey through time seen through the pages of INVOLVE - a nostalgic and heartwarming experience ? For me it was, involved as I have been with INVOLVE for so many years. With 25 years behind us, the time has come to once again take stock of our achievements and limitations. We need to set realistic goals for the future, in keeping with the current needs of society at large,

and equally important, the needs of the present members.

At the same time, let us not lose the creativity and innovativeness that mark all our programs, let us not get into a routine. Finally, let us keep regularly in touch with all our members (past and present), our well wishers and donors through INVOLVE, even if only once or twice a year. For it is INVOLVE which will treasure for Friends Society, for its future members, all its achievements and glory, its laughter and its tears.

Shubhada Kanani

Shubhada Kanani, formerly Shubhada Gautam, was editor of INVOLVE from 1976 to 1982, the longest association with INVOLVE for any member. She was also an active member as In-charge of CHCC and won Friend of the Year Award in 1978-79.



Even if I know that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree

Martin Luther King

PROGRAMME OF FRIEND SOCIETY OVER 25 YEARS

For a youth organisation for University students with all the uncertainties of members, (both qualitative and quantitative) and finance, Friends Society notes with pride its remarkable achievements over the past 25 years in terms of the number, reach innovativeness and impact of its various programmes. What follows is a brief look at these programmes which basically cater to five groups of beneficiaries

- * The handicapped
- * The poor and needy patients
- * The school children
- * The Fatehgunj community
- * The University Youth

The Handicapped

CHEER-UP

In the light of friendship alone can the blind walk and not stumble. This is what a few enthusiastic young collegians discovered way back in 1969 and this is how Friends Society started when these young students of M. S. University went to the 'School For The Blind' and realized that what the bright lively kids actually wanted was not material things but friends full of warmth and affection with whom they could share their thoughts and feelings. Thus was born 'Cheer-up', the first activity of Friends Society. Volunteers visit the children at the Government Blind School and School for handicapped twice a week and organise educational and entertainment programmes, like puppet shows, magic shows, picnics, yoga camps and sports meet. Every festival is celebrated enthusiastically with the

children; be it Rakshabandan, Holi, Makarasankranti. These children are also encouraged to take part in debates, elocution and dance competitions in the 'Inter School Talent Contest' organised by Friends Society for all the school children of Baroda. We note with great pride that our Cheer-up beneficiaries have won prizes in several events like group dance and elocution competitions in this contest. Cheer-up has also included mentally retarded children, in its fold. It is a pleasure for friends to be in the company of these children who are as lively and energetic as the other children.



During 1993-94 several programmes were organised by the Cheer-up group. For the blind and physically handicapped children, a yogasan camp was held at the Pensionpura Govt. School under the guidance of Shri Dushyant Modi of Yoga Kendra. A nature education tour to Sukhi Dam was organised with the help of the Baroda Nature Lovers' Association.

A theatre workshop was conducted at Pensionpura in which even the mentally retarded took part.

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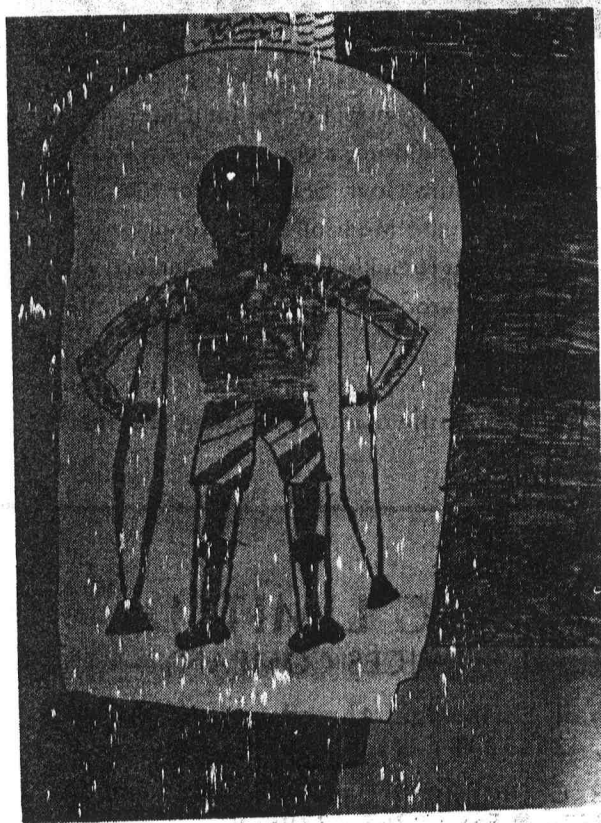
Children also learnt how to make creative things from waste material and were exposed to Bhavai, puppetry and other performing arts.

An exciting trip to the Gujarat Flying Club was arranged.

The Cheer-up group indeed brings smiles to the faces of the institutionalised handicapped children all the year round.

SUNDAY SCHOOL - FOR NON INSTITUTIONALISED HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

It is a school with a difference. It is open when other schools are closed; it is for children who are handicapped and staying with families in Baroda City and above all, it is a school where learning is fun. There is no principal and no teachers but loving volunteers who with great patience and care spend three hours every Sunday with the children who suffer from physical, mental or both handicaps.



The Sunday School evolved from an earlier project: the Mobile Recreation and Medical Aid Project for handicapped which was funded by UNICEF started in August 1983. Presently, it is being funded by Action Aid, U.K.

Its main aim is to provide Supplementary Education, Medical Rehabilitation, Mobility Acceleration and Social integration of its beneficiaries.



Educational activities include exposure of children to banks, railway station, birds and animals and also yoga. Besides reading books creative activities include drawing, painting, clay modelling, making dolls, paper flowers and many others. Children improve their fine motor co ordination and gain confidence when they create something on their own. Our art therapist who comes from Ahmedabad on Sundays believes that creative art has a tremendous therapeutic value; it is a medium of expression through which the introvert handicapped children - why even a normal child can reach out to the environment around him. During the sports session children enjoy indoor and outdoor games.

Medical rehabilitation of the child is an important facet of Sunday School-Physiotherapy, check ups by Orthopaedic Surgeons and Paediatricians, corrective surgery. Equally important are counselling session for family members of the children who perhaps are more nervous and disturbed about the handicap than the children themselves. Through regular parent meetings, parents are guided in correct handling and child rearing practices for

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these special children so that no harm is done and the children can develop their inner potential.

In 1992, Sunday School children were taken on a weeks trip to Pune, Mahabaleshwar and Panchgani. On Feb 24th and 25th, eleven of our children took part in the Third National Integrated Sports Meet held in the sprawling complex of the Laxmiben National College of Physical Education, Gwalior. They were accompanied by five of FS volunteers. They returned winning 4 Gold and 1 Bronze medal.

સાઠકે રુકલ એ ફેંડે ઠંડા સોસાયટીની પ્રવૃત્તિમાં હાથ ધર્યાનું સ્થાન ધરાવે છે. શહેરના અપંગ ભાઈ બહેનોને સવિવારે ફેંડે ઠંડા સોસાયટીમાં ભેગા કરી એમનામાં રહેલી આવડત અને કલાનો વિકાસ કરે છે. હું, ૧૯૭૯ માં લાભાર્થી તરીકે સારથ બન્યો. દસ વરસ પછી હું વોલીયન્ટર તરીકે સાઠકે રુકલમાં પાછો આવ્યો. સાઠકે રુકલમાં આપણે આપણી આવડતનું પ્રતિબિંબ જોઈ શકીએ છીએ. પ્રેક્ટીકલ પ્રોબ્લેમનો સામનો કરવાનો ક્ષમતા કેળવીએ છીએ. જે થીયરી ભણવાથી શીખી શકાતી નથી. જેટલી સેવા આપીએ એનાથી બમણું આપણને જ મળે છે. હું પણ વરસાદ ઇ.સી. મેઝબર રહ્યો. અત્યારે સોસાયટી ફોર ધ ફીઝીકલી હેન્ડીકેપ્ડમાં છેલ્લા ત્રણ વર્ષથી ઇ.સી. મેઝબર છું. અત્યારે હું હેન્ડીકેપ્ડના વિકાસને લગતા પ્રોજેક્ટ માં સામ કરૂ છું. અનેક મોટી જવાબદારીઓને સહજ રીતે ભેલાવી શકું છું. ફેંડે ઠંડા સોસાયટીનો મારા પોતાના વિકાસમાં અદ્યભૂત ફાળો છે. મારી સેવાની જરૂર પડે ત્યારે હું ફેંડે ઠંડા સોસાયટીની પડખે રહેવાનો છું.

શૈલેષભાઈ શાહ

मेरी नजर से हैन्डीकेपड

एक सवाल गुंज उठा दिल में
कौन नहीं है हैन्डीकेपड ?
मैं और तुम यहाँ सब हैं हैन्डीकेपड
कोई व्यवहार में, कोई दिल से तो कोई पैसे से है हैन्डीकेपड
बिना प्यार के, बिना शांति से जीने वाला है हैन्डीकेपड
विश्वासघात दोस्ती में करने वाला है हैन्डीकेपड
देशद्रोह करने वाला नेता भी है हैन्डीकेपड
दिल में खोट रखकर स्वागत करने वाला है हैन्डीकेपड
पैसे के लिए ईमान बेचने वाला भी है हैन्डीकेपड
गरीबों का खून चूसकर अमीर बनने वाला है हैन्डीकेपड
जिसके दिल में मानवता नहीं वह भी है हैन्डीकेपड
मदद की पुकार सुन कर न दीडने वाला भी है हैन्डीकेपड
क्या हक है हमसे भेद रखने वालों
जहाँ सारा जहाँ है हैन्डीकेपड

शैलेश शाह

Dear Mom and Dad

Son : The war is over,
My task at last is Through,
Mom & Dad there is something
I must ask of you
I have a friend, oh, such a friend
He has no family you see.
So Mom & Dad, I would like to
Bring him home with me.

Mom : My son, of course, we do not mind.
If someone comes home with you.
I'm sure that he can come
And stay a day or two.

Son : Mother, you don't understand.
What I'm trying to say,
I want him to stay with us
As long as he may.
But Mom I must tell you,
Please, don't be alarmed.
My friend, you see in battle,
Just happened to lose an arm.

Mom : My son, don't be ashamed,
To bring him home with you,
He can stay a week
Or may be even two.

Son : Mom before you give your answer
There is something I must say,
My friend he fought a battle
In which he lost a leg.

Mom : My son it hurts me to say this
But the answer must be NO
Your Father & I have no time
For a boy who is crippled so.

Sometime later, a letter came, saying their son had died.
When they read the cause of death,
The letter said suicide.
Later in a casket, draped
With the Nation's flag,
They saw their son lying there
Without an arm and leg.

A Class X Student of Bombay

The Poor And Needy Patients

SHETH KHUSHALCHAND CHARITABLE MEDICAL CENTRE

Sheth Khushalchand Charitable Medical Centre (SKCMC) is located on the premises of Shree Sayaji General Hospital, Baroda. It sells medicines at concessional rates (on an average 15-20% cheaper) to the poor patients in the hospital.

SKCMC came into existence in 1974 under the sponsorship of Friends Society, with an initial grant of Rs. 80,000/- from Khushalchand Charity Trust. Activities of the centre are managed by a core of volunteers consisting of doctors, medical students, teachers and pharmacists. The capital investment in medicines stocked at the centre has remained at Rs. 80,000/-, while the annual sales have increased over the years. The total annual sale in 1993-94 was Rs. 28,90,000/- indicating an efficient turnover of the capital once in 10 days. The minimum saving accruing to the beneficiaries is approximately Rs. 5 lacs per year.

In spite of the limited capital of Rs. 80,000/-, SKCMC has maintained a steady increase in its activities over the last two decades.

In 1983, a Schedule 'X' counter was started for dispensing medicines essential for epileptics, which are not easily available in the market due to strict sales regulations imposed by the Government.

In 1990, a rational therapy cell was constituted. It undertakes a screening process to identify medicines that are rational, reasonably priced and of standard quality. Availability of these medicines from SKCMC promotes rational use of medicines.

A grant of Rs. 1,50,000/- from Shri Jalaram Sevashram Trust, Baroda has enabled SKCMC to extend its services to night hours since December, 1992. Hence, it now renders services all 24 hours throughout the year except on Sundays and 8 public holidays.

ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE :

1. To procure and sell rational, standard quality medicines at concessional rates.
2. To sell Schedule 'X' medicines for epileptics.
3. To promote rational use of medicines.
4. To maintain cool drinking water facility for patients and their relatives.

A new water cooler at the cost of Rs. 27,000/- was recently donated by Shri Dinesh Foundation & Shri Maganbhai B. Patel Charity Trust at the behest of United Way of Vadodara.

PERFORMANCE INDICES :

Tangible :

In the last 20 years, medicines and surgical items worth Rs. 2,40,00,000/- have been sold from the centre, resulting in the net saving of Rs. 36 lacs to the patients.

Intangible :

Availability of medicines round the clock in the hospital premises itself.

Saving of both time and money for the patients, who would otherwise need to go to distant medical stores.

Availability of medicines even during strikes, curfew etc. Assured quality of medicines.

FUTURE PLANS :

1. To prepare a formulary of branded essential medicines based on "Essential Drug List" of W.H.O., 1992.
2. To educate undergraduate and postgraduate medical students regarding rational therapy.
3. To educate the consumer (patient) about rational use of medicines.

The SKCMC receives contributions every year from Khushalchand Charity Trust, Baroda Municipal Corporation and United Way of Vadodara, towards its recurring expenditure. However, this proves to be inadequate to meet the running expenditure of the store. Therefore the centre has had to levy a 3%

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service charge on medicines sold. (The service charge levied on surgical items is 10%).

The SKCMC proposes to raise a corpus of Rs. 10,00,000/- and use the accruing interest to meet the objectives of :

- a. Subsidising life saving and other essential medicines, estimated to require Rs. 60,000/- annually.
- b. Abolishing the service charge on medicines, which is estimated to amount to Rs. 80,000 to 1,00,000 annually.

We have got a good response to our above appeal and are glad to inform that so far we have received about Rs. 3,00,000/- as donation towards this scheme. Of this, a donation of Rs. 2,17,000/- (US\$ 7,001) has come from Mr. Pravin D. Patel of California, U.S.A. To synchronise with the silver jubilee year of Friends Society and 20 years of SKCMC, from January 1995, a subsidy scheme has been started for very needy patients. Under this scheme, poor patients of S.S.G. Hospital on recommendation of treating doctors, will be given a further subsidy up to 20% on selected 12 medicines, which are either life saving in nature or are essential but too costly. Initially, we will be spending about Rs. 40,000 on a yearly basis towards this scheme. But if we receive further donations from philanthropist individuals/organisations, we shall increase this amount.

You can HELP

the needy patients through SKCMC by :

1. becoming an active volunteer and rendering voluntary professional service - 2 to 3 hours per week.
2. donating money to corpus fund and help raise donations from others.
3. sponsoring expenses of medicines for very poor patients of tuberculosis, epilepsy, hypertension, diabetes etc.
4. donating in kind for example refrigerator, water cooler, medicine racks, etc.

Donations to SKCMC are exempted from income tax under section 80G(5).

EYE DONATION

The commonest reason of blindness among the millions of blind people in India is corneal opacity. If this opaque cornea can be replaced by a transparent one a blind person's vision can be restored. FS gives us a chance to give the gift of eyesight to a blind person by donating our eyes after death through it's "Eye Donation Program".

The main aim of the eye donation program which started in August 1986 is to motivate people to donate their eyes. The Times Eye Research Foundation, New Delhi, helps us in our efforts.

The group has identified potential beneficiaries in institutions such as 'The Blind School', ABHILASH (Jyoti Hospital for Handicapped) and Blind Men Association of Vadodara.

With the objective of creating awareness regarding eye donation among people this group had organized

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a street play, commonly known as Bhavai, in 11 schools in Baroda. The schools were very co-operative and the response from the students was overwhelming.

A poster and a slogan competition is regularly held on the theme of eye-donation. The rolling trophy of 1993 went to Convent of Jesus and Mary. In 1994, 100 students from fifteen schools took part and the rolling trophy went to Bright School.

Blood Donation

"In ten minutes, you can save someone's life", announces a poster on blood donation at one of the several blood donation camps organised by FS since 1970. Voluntary blood donation is a priceless donation which no amount of money can equal. It has become even more crucial in recent years with the spread of the AIDS epidemic.

The programme started primarily to mobilize the student community to donate blood. It is no mean achievement for F.S. that the students contributions to the Blood Bank of SSG Hospital jumped up from almost zero to 25% in the 1970s and 1980s. Besides this, another aim of the programme is to disseminate scientific knowledge about blood donation to people. A pamphlet on anaemia was brought out when it was realized that many potential donors (specially girls) could not donate as they were anaemic. The Gujarat Red Cross Society has awarded rotating Asha Parekh Trophy thrice to FS for collecting maximum number of blood bottles in Gujarat State.

With the active support of 'Nagrik Raktadaan Samiti' and Blood Bank of SSG Hospital, Baroda in the last 25 years FS has collected over 15,000 units of blood.

The growth of our blood donation programme was remarkable from 1971 to 1984 during which we were able to collect over 600 bottles every year. In recent years we have not been able to arrange many camps due to organisational measures and we feel

the need to inject more life (or blood!) into the programme.

School Children

PROGRAMME FOR FUTURE LEADERS

Nehru has said - "The nation walks on the tiny footsteps of its children". With the aim of developing leadership qualities in children, the Programme for Future Leaders group started in 1971. The objective was to bring school children of various schools together and involve them in non-formal leadership training and outward bound adventurous camps, thus enriching their personality and group living experiences. In the initial years, nature camps and general knowledge contests known as the Sanskar Quiz Contest, were held for school children. An



immensely popular and dynamic programme was the Outward Bound programme, held annually at Deolali in Maharashtra; for over a week. Here about 30 school boys

and girls were exposed to adventurous activities like rock climbing and cross country treks as well as intellectual activities like taking part in debates, cultural programmes and others promoting leadership development.



In recent years, since 1989 the Interschool Talent Contest organised by Friends Society has become a much sought after programme. Here the students of both English and the vernacular mediums compete together in varied events like elocution, quiz, skits, mono acting, solo, dance, group dance, vocal music and fancy dress. Over 850 students from 37 schools of Baroda took part in the latest edition of this contest - March 1994. Handicapped children also recently participated in most of the items. We are thrilled to discover the amazing talent displayed by all the participants.

Another recent activity of the PFL was a theatre workshop which was conducted at Friends Society by a theatre group called Katha. Fifty children from different schools of Baroda took part in making masks, dialogue delivery and the art of facial expressions.

Annual Sports Meet for the physically handicapped: This is one more feather in the cap of P F L. It began in 1990

and received an enthusiastic response. In this meet there is participation by both institutionalised and non-institutionalised physically and mentally handicapped children and the Blind in events like running race, tri-cycle race, lemon and spoon race and musical chairs. Our aim in organising this meet is to strengthen the belief among these children that nothing is beyond them.

The Fatehgunj Community

INTEGRATED BALWADI

It is a challenge to integrate handicapped children into the mainstream of society. The Integrated Balwadi of FS has successfully worked in this direction since 1982 by providing common learning experiences to normal and handicapped 3-6 year olds living in slums. In this unique venture funded by Action - Aid, the children together share creative activities, indoor and outdoor play and trips to interesting places. This helps to foster self confidence in the handicapped children and nurtures their potential while helping the normal children to accept their handicapped friends. At present, 63 children are enrolled, out of which 32 are handicapped. For 5 days a week, paid teachers and helpers run the Balwadi, and the Physiotherapist guides children in daily exercises. Additionally, a clinical psychologist and a speech therapist also provide their expertise. Parent counselling is also an important component of this programme.

A Toy Library has been started for those who cannot afford expensive toys for their children. A nominal fee is charged when the parents come with their children to change their toys every Wednesday. This library was started and is run by Binduben Shah who has been kind enough to donate the toys.

EDUCATIONAL SPONSORSHIP

Every child has a right to education, yet poverty robs countless children in India of this right to knowledge. In Friends Society the Educational Sponsorship program, since 1981, helps the poor and deserving children to

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obtain formal school education for a minimum period of seven years. Currently, 102 children are its beneficiaries. Educational Sponsorship Program is financially supported by Action Aid, a U.K. based organisation with Indian Headquarters at Bangalore. The Programme locates 'sponsors' from various regions (including Baroda). Each sponsor adopts a Child and helps his or her education through support by way of school fees, expenses for uniforms, books, etc. An equally challenging task is to locate needy and deserving children of 7 to 15 years from nearby slums; to maintain a link between the sponsor and a child by way of letters, cards and photographs.

Other activities include parent meetings and social events; follow up by trained social workers, medical checkups, educational trips and so on. This 15 year old programme has also offered vocational guidance to the outgoing children; as well as technical training (TV & radio repairing, motor vehicle repairing, motor driving, typing, sewing etc.) to several children.

INCOME GENERATION PROGRAMMES FOR WOMEN

'Be a woman before being a wife or a mother'

And what better way to attempt emancipation of women than training them to become self employed and skilled in some income generating activity. With this broad aim, Friends Society has been running income generating, skill training programmes for women from nearby slums, specifically to enable women/adolescent girls to earn extra income for their families and to promote their educational and social development.

Since June 1983, by giving a token fee, more than 600 women have benefitted from this programme by mastering sewing, embroidery, beadwork, fabric painting, etc. The sewing class has become so popular that we have to run it in two shifts, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. We now have 75 students. As many of these students are uneducated our sewing class teachers have to teach them basic arithmetic. Later these girls sit for the government exams W.C.G.M. (Women and Children Garment Making) and E.F.W. (Embroidery Fancy Work). Special training is given in Mehndi, adult education and training programmes and maintaining and repairing sewing machines.

Under this project of income generation our aim is to provide small scale income to interested girls by providing them the material and paying them for their labour. To help them we have built a display centre called "Chathorang" where we sell the finished goods. In 1994 these girls were taken on an educational tour of Rajasthan. This year we plan to organise a trip to Mahabaleshwar for them.

PUBLIC READING ROOM, PETIT LIBRARY AND STUDY CENTRE

"Books are your best friends" and many such friends can be found in Petit Library which is meant to promote healthy reading habits amongst the Fatehgunj public. The public reading room began in October 1971, the Petit Library in March 1973 and the study centre in January 1978.

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The Petit Library operates three days a week while the public reading room provides news papers and magazines everyday for people around Fatehgunj. The nominal annual membership fees enables more people to use the library. The study centre houses books, periodicals and journals on thought provoking subjects.

At the moment there are around 300 members, and the total number of books exceed 9000, in three languages - Gujarati, Hindi and English the library also has 1500 books in the childrens section. Some of these books and magazines are received as donation.



It is indeed a matter of pride that even with decreasing trends in reading habits and the increasing TV - Video mania, this library is actively used by a large number of people.

We are very grateful to Dr. S K. Menon for regularly donating magazines and the Economic Times.

Baroda Charitable Educational Fund has been providing magazines in all the three languages - Hindi, Gujarati and English. Part of their Funds is used for buying books for children.

CHILD HEALTH CARE CENTRE

As a nation we will complete 50 yrs of Independence from British rule in just a couple of years from now, yet we have not freed our children - especially those

from the economically weaker sections from the clutches of 3 M's :

Malnutrition, Morbidity and Mortality - Friends Society decided to do its bit to help deprived children under 5 yrs of age have a healthy childhood, by establishing the Child Health Care Centre (CHCC) in 1978.

The CHCC is run by F.S. volunteers with support from post graduate students from the Pediatrics Department of the Medical College. Students from the Department of Foods & Nutrition, Faculty of Home Science some of whom become F.S. volunteers provide nutrition and education to mothers.

A social worker makes home visits regularly. Every Saturday afternoon, about 25 children on average receive immunization, are treated for minor ailments and their growth is monitored through health growth charts. The mothers receive advice on various aspects of child care.

In F.S., members come and go, but its a feather in the cap that it has consistently remained open every Saturday, despite occasional problems of manpower and supplies. It has benefitted over 1500 young children and made hundreds of mothers more aware of healthy ways of bringing up children. The overall growth profile of the children was studied in 1989 and again recently in 1994 and it was observed that over the years a majority of CHCC beneficiaries show consistent weight gain and faster recovery from illness. Healthy baby contests and health exhibitions have helped to spread health messages in the Fatehgunj Community.

On March 20th 1994 a Healthy Baby Contest was organized wherein 52 children took part. The all round health of the child was taken to account and prizes were given.

Youth Club

Youth is a period full of energy, dynamism and vigour. What is needed is channelisation of this energy for constructive purposes and the Youth Club tries to fulfil this need.

Initiated in 1978, the Youth Club provides a supportive atmosphere and helps to reduce delinquent tendencies amongst the adolescent boys and girls of Fatehgunj, Kamatipura area who usually are school drop outs. These children are provided with facilities for games, non formal education, coaching classes and outstation leadership and nature appreciation camps. Some of the needy children are given financial or material support.

In order to create interaction between the Youth Club children and the handicapped of Cheer-Up Youth Club girls made rakhis and tied them to the boys at Pensionpura. 15th August and 26th January were celebrated with skits, dances and songs by the children. 'Youth Week' was also celebrated from 12th January to 19th January during which the children took part in essay, singing competitions and athletics. Karate classes were held for the children by Dhirubhai, one of the old Youth Club students.

STREET & WORKING CHILDREN PROJECT

Recently, it had been decided to start a new project on street and working children with the help of Financial assistance from UNICEF. The main objective behind this was to provide Support Services

to the other NGO's as and when required which includes Volunteers, Van, Street Children, Musical band, etc.

University Youth

PROGRAMME FOR UNIVERSITY YOUTH

Friends Society attracts its' members from among University students. The programme came into existence in January 1970 to provide University students (many of whom became Friends Society members), specially tailored exercises and exposures which would bring about individual and organisational development. The activities under Programme for University Youth are presented below :

TRIP AROUND THE TOWN :

For a fresher to M. S. University especially a hostelite from outside Baroda, taking part in the 'Trip Around The Town' (TATT) is like finding new Friends.

In order to familiarize the new students to the M. S. University campus as well as to the city of Baroda every year Friends Society holds 'TATT'. This day - long bus trip also enables students to get acquainted with Friends Society.

Started in January 1970, this programme introduces the freshers to various Faculties of M. S. University, famous historical places as well as the comparatively recent and modern sites of Baroda city.

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On an average 70 freshers every year participate in TATT.

INTERVIEW CLINIC :

For a young man or woman seeking a job, performing successfully in an interview is half the battle won. To equip final year students to confidently face an interview panel, a mock interview clinic is organised by the PUY group every year for volunteers who are final year students. The day long sessions include filling up of application form, participating in group discussion on provocative topics and facing an interview panel comprising eminent officials from Industries and University faculties. The panelists then give a feedback to each participant on the merits and demerits of their performance.

SELF DEVELOPMENT TALKS :

This is another activity for University Youth which makes visible the motto of Friends Society 'Self Development Through Service'. Intangibly, Friends Society is itself a platform for Self Development. In addition, the Self Development talks by eminent personalities expose members in a tangible way to concepts of self, personality, dynamic living and other issues close to one's life and heart. Over the past years, many experienced people have spoken on topics such as religion and personality, time management, communication skills, wild life conservation, etc.

Further, members themselves have spoken on their academic disciplines. Thus subjects like Geology, Nutrition, Medicine, Surgery and Engineering have become subjects of lively discussion. Through this activity members gain the confidence of speaking to a group and of actively participating in group discussion.

PROGRAMME PLANNING CAMPS :

These annual camps not only aim at chalking out the years' activities in Friends Society, they also provide exposure to members in programme planning skills and team work. Executive committee members are trained to become effective group leaders.

In the 1994 camp, several resource persons like Dr. B. M. Palan, Dr. Shubhada Kanani, Dr. Sandhya Joshi and Mr. Sharad Bhatia spoke on varied topics such as our belief systems, leadership development in Friends Society and role of an in-charge in Friends Society.

INVOLVE :

Involve is an official bulletin of Friends Society which not only records Friends Society activities and keeps old and new members in touch, but is also an effective tool for developing appropriate documenting and writing skills in members.



At FS

In Baroda I know of the one
Where Friends live and have fun
You get a lot done
And do it with fun
So listen - you might find a pun

Just give you a task to accomplish
You'll do it without an accomplice
You'll get so much learning
And still have your fun
Despite this, you're not even pompous

I'm happy to know I can call
You anytime! I'd tell you all
On you I depend
My dear, cherished friend
With you there, I never will fall

Sailesh Halai

INTERNAL ORGANISATION

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

All the programs and their related issues are discussed and managed by the Executive Committee which meets usually once in two months. The committee receives group reports, evaluates the functioning of various groups and gives its suggestions. The day-to-day project work is managed by the respective group-in-charges who are EC members. These group in-charges have the operational freedom to plan and implement their group activities with their group members to the best of their own ability, with guidelines from the Executive Committee. The outgoing Executive Committee at the end of the year selects the next EC. We do not believe in elections. As far as possible 50% of members selected are those who are likely to remain in the M.S. University for the next two or three years. This policy has paid dividends since no vacuum is created when senior volunteers leave FS.

SOURCES OF FINANCE

FS believes that fund raising is a public relation program and a valuable experience for members. Money is more judiciously used if member's own efforts are involved in collecting part of the fund. Better more members raising small amounts rather than few members raising large amounts. With 14 projects and a Rs. 2,00,000 budget, fund raising is literally the life line of FS. Comparing the sources of funds, then (at first FS reunion : 1980) and now (third reunion : 1995), the breakup is :

	Membership Fees	Donations	Fund Raising
Then (1980)	15%	50%	35%
(1991)	20%	25%	55%
Now (1994)	7%	38%	55%

Thus, fund raising by members assumes added importance in the present context. Some recent fund raising programmes have been Charity Film Show, Cultural Programs, Greet Help Cards and Calenders, Charity Gift Schemes etc.

Intangible benefits : Members who actively participate in fund raising drives find that they improve their communication skills; discover ways of convincing skeptical people; can write better official letters and think of cost-benefits ratios: efforts put in for returns gained.

UNWRITTEN CONVENTIONS OF FS

Membership : We believe that 3 members can do the job of 30 if all of them are interested. We, therefore, do not go for mass blind membership.

Selection of Executive Committee Members : We do not have elections for membership to the executive committee. You know the implications of elections. Every year, the outgoing executive committee nominates EC members for the next year.

Leadership Vacuum : Ours is a student organisation with a floating population. We have, therefore,

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adopted a policy that as far as possible 50% of the executive committee members should be those who are likely to be in the University for the next 2 to 3 years, so that when the seniors leave, there is no leadership vacuum.

Dispersal of Leadership : We have 15 service projects. Therefore, we have to see that all the leaders do not fall in a few groups. We make efforts to disperse leadership in all the activities.

Beneficiaries are our Friends : When we work with beneficiaries, especially the handicapped, we see that we do not pity them. We work as their friends.

Small is Beautiful, Big is Blessing : We give importance to smaller donations because our accountability increases to many people.

Accountability : We believe in self-accountability. Where a job can be done by going on a bicycle, our members would not spend money of the organisation on rickshaw. Judicious use of money is our policy.

Personal Expenses : We do not encourage personal expenses of members from FS funds. Even tea in EC meetings or group meetings is contributed by members.

Publicity : We do not shun publicity but we strongly feel that it should be proportionate to our achievements. No individual publicity is encouraged. You may, therefore, be surprised to note that no names are printed on any literature of the society.

Collaboration leads to best results : We believe in seeking support from or lending it to like-minded organisations/individuals for effective implementation of needbased activities. We avoid duplication of activities done by others.

Once a Friend, Always a Friend : We believe in continued friendship and relationship. Many of our ex-active members are now our life members.

Self-Development through Service : We have realised that by engaging ourselves in service activities we achieve our own development and therefore, we do not feel we oblige anybody.

Life is a "brief candle". It is a splendid torch that I want to make burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

Bernard Shaw

And much it pains my heart to think
What man has made of man.

William Wordsworth

Listening is a very good skill, but only listening is a bad habit too.

Failure is not a crime, but failure to learn from failure is.

Balance Sheet as on 31st March, 1994.

Liabilities	Rs.	Assets	Rs
Trust Funds	1,33,528=20	Furniture & Fixtures	77,418=00
Other remarked Funds	55,003=01	Loans	65,050=00
Loan	73,214=22	Advances	94,832=72
Audit Fee Payable	750=00	Cash & Bank Balance	1,66,168=57
Income & Expenditure A/c	1,40,973=86		
Total	4,03,469=29	Total	4,03,469=29

FROM THE FS DIARY 1969 - 1995

- 1969 : University campus tense due to riots and disturbance in city. FS volunteers went around the hostels, easing the tension and keeping the campus free from trouble.
- 1971-72 : First ever survey of the physically handicapped in Baroda city initiated by a motivated FS member, along with National Service Scheme (NSS). The appalling state of the physically and mentally handicapped persons led to concentrated efforts to rehabilitate them through FS. Gradually, these efforts culminated in a full fledged sister organisation of FS, specially geared for rehabilitation of the handicapped : the V-One Society.
- 1972 : Biggest ever Blood Donation camp in Gujarat (at that time) held in September at the Faculty of Commerce: a record collection of 234 bottles, with many students returning disappointed due to shortage of storage space of bottles.
- 1974 : The Navnirman movement. FS took up the challenge of collecting 59 bottles of blood for riot victims.
- History repeated itself in August 1990 when once again FS members knocked doors of hostel rooms at midnight to collect donors for riot victims.
- 1975 : Epidemic of scabies overtook the social welfare institution for handicapped and orphan children. Doctors and other volunteers undertook the herculean task of clearing up this epidemic with personalised care.
- 1977 : A survey of Beggars Home revealed the terrible state of the land around the institution. Promptly a "Shramdaan" was organised wherein inmates and FS volunteers levelled the land and transformed it into a vegetable garden.
- 1979 : A health check up programme organised for children in Fatehgunj slums, in which 30 specialists of 8 disciplines rendered their services. Of the 174 children examined, 159 were followed up subsequently for further investigations or treatment.
- 1980 : FS bagged the Asha Parekh Trophy for the third time for collecting the highest number of donated bottles in a year in Gujarat.

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On March 9, the first reunion of past and present members took place.

1982 : A film actress at FS ?

Mrs. Kamini Kaushal inaugurated the FS Balwadi in July. She was invited because of her lesser known but equally important talent at creating 'Poupee' toys and doll houses for children.

1990 : The first issue of the Bulletin of the Rational Therapy Cell of SKCMC brought out on 'Rational use of hematinics (iron containing tablets) in Anaemia as part of educating the general public on rational drugs.

1992 : SKCMC started the night service. During the communal riots all medical stores were closed but SKCMC remained open to serve the patients.

1993 : Our Sunday School Children won four gold medals and one bronze at the Third National Integrated Sports meet held at Gwalior.

1994 : - 1) Food grains were distributed to those who were affected by floods in the Fatehgunj area.

2) Each year hundreds of students who pass out from Std XII have to go to Ahmedabad for their marksheet at the L.D.College for admission to higher courses. To spare them from making this trip FS under the guidance of Prof. H.G.Rajput collected forms from over two hundred students and submitted it at Ahmedabad on their behalf.

3) Volunteers got a taste of nursing skills when they helped out in the SSG hospital at the time of the strike by Class IV employees.

FRIEND OF THE YEAR AWARD

Who is a Friend of the Year ?

He or She is the best volunteer of that year who is selected by members through a well designed and systematic process of evaluating qualities like team spirit, initiative, open-mindedness and consistently responsible contribution to the activities of the society.

1969-70	Yashree Sambekar
1970-71	Yusuf Bora & Villo Palia
1971-72	Sagun Desai
1972-73	Nisheet Desai
1973-74	Durgadas Chelani
1974-75	Munindra Kharod
1975-76	Ashwin Dhabalia
1976-77	Shripal Shah
1977-78	Jaikishan Gianchandani & Shirish Shah
1978-79	Shubhada Kanani and Rahul Sharma
1979-80	Radha Mishra
1980-81	Rizwana Merchant
1981-82	Haider Ali Saiyed and Pravin Bhasin
1982-83	Hitendra Bhatt
1987-88	Jaisukh Sanchania
1988-89	Anupama Joshi
1989-90	Supreet Prabhu
1990-91	Navinder Bedi

The rest of the Awards will be declared on FRIENDS DAY on 25th FEB 1995.

Swami Vivekanandji - on self confidence - "If you have faith in the three hundred and thirty million of your mythological Gods, and in all the Gods which foreigners have introduced into your midst, and still have no faith in yourself, there is no salvation for you".

FELICITATIONS

The following members were felicitated at the Reunion 21 for their outstanding contribution to Friends Society :

1. Jayendra Desai
2. Raju Gaikwad
3. Dr. Shubhada Kanani
4. Mahesh Jivrajani
5. Dr. Kantha Patel
6. Jagdish Rathi
7. Vishnu Prasad Vyas
8. Saadat Attarwala
9. Ashok Shah
10. Amina Aunty
11. Radha Mishra

FS - MY RECOLLECTIONS

I was dining in the mess at the Sardar Patel Hall one evening when a social work student, Girdhar Vaswani, approached me. This was in early 1968, I think. He asked me whether I would be interested in doing volunteer work at the city's mental hospital. After inquiring about what I should do, how long it will take and how dangerous was the assignment, it did not take me long to say yes. My life was dull as a third year engineering student. It was the same routine of the hostel to college to library, and back to the hostel day after day. I needed some change and excitement. Working as a volunteer at the mental hospital was an interesting experience because I started seeing the people I worked with as human beings - people with feelings, emotions, and interesting backgrounds - not just as mental patients.

After a month or two, again while having dinner at SP Hall mess, Girdhar Vaswani asked me how things were going at the mental hospital. I was quite enthusiastic about it. Girdhar had an idea for starting an organisation for the University students to engage in similar voluntary activities. Girdhar thus became the "Father of Friends Society".

It was late afternoon. Three of us - Girdhar, myself and another social work student, Usha Majmudar - met on the roof of the Faculty of Social Work building. We discussed ideas about how to start and run an organisation for University students to engage them in similar voluntary activities. Girdhar suggested the name "Friends Society" and thus it came into existence on August 15, 1969.

My first assignment was to produce posters for bulletin boards. In my room in the SP Hall, I prepared about a dozen posters announcing the organisation and inviting students to join. Then, I went around the boys and girls hostels to post them.

Within a week or two, we had five or six students showing interest. I believe the first one was Kamlesh Vora. We had our first meeting to discuss what to do. We visited the Home for Crippled Children. Thus, the "Cheer-Up" group became Friends Society's first activity. From that point on, the activities and membership grew quickly. Within a year, there were over 50 members, half of them were active.

The next five years established a solid footing for FS. During this time, a core group of 25 to 30

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Mrs. Kanchan R. Patel
(Active Member 1977-78)
Dr. B. B. Zanzarukiya
(Active Member 1972-83)

volunteers gave shape to Friends Society, which still holds today. To say that they were active members would be an understatement. They not only gave much of their time and effort, but they also gave their hearts and souls to FS. A few members from that original group are still quite active and continuing to make significant contributions. They are, to my knowledge, Mrs. Amina Tyabji, "Auntie" as we know her, Girdhar Vaswani, Sagun Desai, and Ashok Shah. I hope I have not missed anyone.

As FS developed and grew rapidly, the need for a place of our own was deeply felt by everyone. So we searched for a suitable place that was near the girls' hostels and the university. As the search for volunteers were getting frustrated, they noticed the current building. It was in an awful condition, surrounded by a six feet deep ditch which filled-up in monsoons and gave a dreadful stench. In the initial days, we had to wade through the filthy water to get to the building. The inside of the building was also in great need of repair. Steps in the front of the building made it very hard for persons in wheelchair to enter. Auntie contacted the trustees of the Petit Library to persuade them to let us use the building. Then, the municipality was kind enough to dump truck loads of construction debris and rubbish to fill the big ditch surrounding the building, and helped with planting trees and flowering plants. Since then, The Petit Library has played a crucial and central role in the development of the FS over the years.

In summary, from the humble beginnings, Friends Society grew rapidly during the first few years under three key influences: development ideas and direction provided by Girdhar; leadership, love and nurturing of individual members provided by Auntie; and day-to-day coordination and running around by me. While the three provided the foundation, the actual building of the activities was done by a cadre of dedicated volunteers, Sagun and others. The dedicated work put in by all was phenomenal. For example, to get ready for the first Friends Day, Ashok Shah (our own artist) stayed up all night painting the FS sign that was in the front of the

building, and we had fresh cold milk from the milk truck around 5 am! This spirit of cooperation and giving one's best laid the foundation for the Society. And, it seems that this spirit is alive today after 25 years!

Niranjan Dave

Niranjan Dave is one of the three founder members of Friends Society in 1969 and the founder of V-One Society (fellowship with physically handicapped). A workaholic he devoted all his time and energy to nurture these two organisations and it is his pioneering efforts that have kept it going.

In 1973, he left for USA where he now holds a very high position as a Safety Engineer.

Very dependable, open minded and sincere, his continued support is a source of encouragement and inspiration to us.

Like clouds yielding rain, the sun destroying darkness and moon pleasing human hearts, a good friend comes to help spontaneously.

Ramayana

All is ephemeral - fame and the famous as well.

Marcus Aurelius

The company of the saints is like the sweet smell from the perfumer's shop; even if the perfume gives you nothing, the perfume is wafted and you enjoy it.

Kabir

If one loves you, he will criticise you.

Ali

ROLE OF F S IN OUR LIVES

WHAT F.S. MEANS TO ME

One day a friend asked me why I had joined F.S. and what F.S. meant to me. I told him that I had joined F.S. because I wanted to give to needy people what I could give, however I realized that I had received much more than what I had given.

The first thing I got in F.S. was a lesson in humility, I realized that I have a lot to learn. I have learnt that in F.S. no member is everything, but nothing is complete without every member. I have received practical training in F.S. on "How to Win Friends & Influence People" :

Remember peoples name, never criticize, always give a smile, accept ideas with an open mind and request instead of demand.

Marketing, Accounts, Personal Management, Planning, preparing reports, having an action plan, delegating jobs, co-ordinating, attending meetings... are probably only taught in an M.B.A. course. The unfortunate thing is that F.S. can not give its members an M.B.A. degree.

F.S. is for me a second home where I have met people I will never forget. The more you take part in F.S., the more important part F.S. plays in your life. Volunteers who leave F.S. and begin their careers progress rapidly because they know one thing that is not taught anywhere, how to get along and work with all types of people. There are people who believe that F.S. affects your studies and personal relationships adversely, I think that it is quite the opposite because F.S. teaches you your

duties and responsibilities not only towards F.S. but also towards your parents, your friends and all people who come in contact with you.

I told my friend that a person who has not been an F.S. member would not understand what F.S. has meant to all the members who have come here during the past 25 years.

Sujeet Prabhu

I DISCOVERED MYSELF IN FS

The period was 1977 - 78. I was in the seventeenth year of my life full of adolescent doubts and a feeling of uncertainty for the future. I wanted to utilise the freedom of college life to develop self confidence, to enrich my personality. But how ?

One day, Shubhada and Rahul - FS members came to our F.Y. BSc. (Home) classroom and oriented us about FS and its motto "Self Development Through Social Service". I went with my friends to FS and found its work interesting.

I joined 'Friends' in 1978. The senior members welcomed us with warmth and affection and helped me to choose the group "Child Health Care Centre" which functioned every Saturday afternoon.

On the first Saturday I was there at the clinic to observe and learn. I was later given the responsibility of physical arrangement and weighing children.

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The job which seemed so simple now made me nervous on the first day. Yet by the end of the second Saturday I had a wonderful feeling that I was trusted with important tasks and this was the first step of the ladder I was to climb at FS in developing self confidence.

Subsequently as an incharge of CHCC I learnt all about distribution of work among members, inspiring members of the team to work hard, conducting meetings and writing minutes, thus developing better communication skills. I realised I had joined the 'right organisation at the right time'. I also developed emotional maturity and accepted a handicapped brother in my family. With my experience in FS with the handicapped, I understood my brother better and hence I feel emotionally bonded to FS. The experience of working with children and the handicapped are very dear in my heart and are like precious jewels which I treasure. The friends I have made here will be my friends forever.

Thank God for FS which helped me to discover my talents. I pray that God gives me the wisdom to realise the strengths of others and to help them grow.

Rizwana Palejwala

Rizwana was a very active and motivated FS volunteer in the late 1970s and early 1980s. As an incharge of Child Health Care Centre she steered the group with confidence and very deservingly won the Friend of The Year Award in 1980-81.

WHAT FRIENDS HAVE TO SAY

Friends Society to me is a way of bringing my real self into action. The thing I really enjoy in FS is that all the members are from different communities and backgrounds, but they all work in harmony and co-operation for the service and betterment of their social environment.

I hope that I may, through my service, be able to keep the flames of FS burning brightly and maintain its traditions.

Savio D'mello

Our friend Nikkhil Bhatt who helps with the accounts at FS has this to say;

"I have participated in different activities at FS and have enjoyed being with blind children during treks and picnics. When I was hospitalized after an accident in 1992 many of my friends at FS worked hard to collect blood for me; kept me company at odd hours in the hospital.

I firmly believe that Friends Society is the place where all grow and develop together while serving the needy people of the society at large.

Nikhil Bhatt

SUGGESTIONS THROUGH EXPERIENCE

September 4, 1994

My recent visit to FS was a wonderful and emotional experience for me. It really was great to meet you all and to sense your interest, commitment, and involvement in FS. It is volunteers like you who truly deserve the credit for the fact that FS is still going strong after 25 years.

1. Get involved - really involved. Participate vigorously in at least one activity and somewhat in several activities. Seek out responsibilities, join the executive committee, volunteer for special assignments. The experience you gain from these activities will be "worth its weight gold" for the rest of your life - more than you can imagine it now.
2. Do not get carried away. Having said what I said about getting fully involved, I would like to

remind you that too much of anything is not good.

If your studies, other extracurricular activities, personal relationship, etc. are getting significantly affected by your involvement in FS, then you are getting carried away. You need to watch out to detect when the involvement is getting out of control.

3. Do not show, or feel pity for others. When you engage in activities such as a visit to the Home for Crippled Children, be sure to properly interact with the people. Proper interaction means not to feel sorry for them, to treat them as human beings first, and then try to make their lives a little better, easier through the activities you conduct. It is perfectly OK to have a soft corner for them in your heart, but you don't have to show it. (Can you explain why? HINT: Think of one of your limitations, no matter what it is, and how would you react if someone feels sorry for you for having that limitation.)

Well, Friends! These three suggestions are not only limited to your role in the FS, but they also reflect what is crucially important to succeed in the world of work. Let me explain :

- ❑ The first item relates to showing enthusiasm and interest, seeking out opportunity to get involved (as opposed to waiting for someone to come and tell you what to do), hard work and strong effort to carry out the activity you asked for, and ability to make and follow through on a commitment. These characteristics are crucial for success in any endeavor you will engage in the future.
- ❑ The second item relates to having a balanced approach to life. If you focus all your time and energy in one activity, then you will develop a very narrow outlook towards life, and you will become just a plain boring person. Being a "one-track" person (as opposed to a well-rounded person) will restrict you from going places in the world of work.

- ❑ The third item relates to respecting others, not feeling superior, and having sensitivity. When you do not respect others (including those subordinate to you), when you walk around making others feel inferior, and when you lack sensitivity (can't get into other person's shoes), people start to "hate your guts". You won't have many friends and allies, and without them, it will be very hard to move up the ladder.

These points are directly from my decades of experience - not from any textbook! I hope you will consider them.

Niranjan Dave

LIFE

What is life I often wonder,
Is it a valley between birth and death ?
Or is it a stage of which I am an actor,
Performing for someone I never met.

Is it a quest for the ultimate truth
In which innumerable times we lie;
We call life a punishment,
Yet we all are afraid to die.

Is it just a shallow stream
which has to meet the sea so deep
Or is it strife for a dream
For which we sell of our sleep.

Is it like a refreeless game
Where rules change as per the need,
And only for name and fame
One does a good deed.

In search of our goal
we have no time to stand and stare,
We often disobey our soul
And then wonder whether God is there.

Such is the hypocrisy of life
In which we are all bound;
So this mystery called life
Will never be unwound.

Supreet Prabhu

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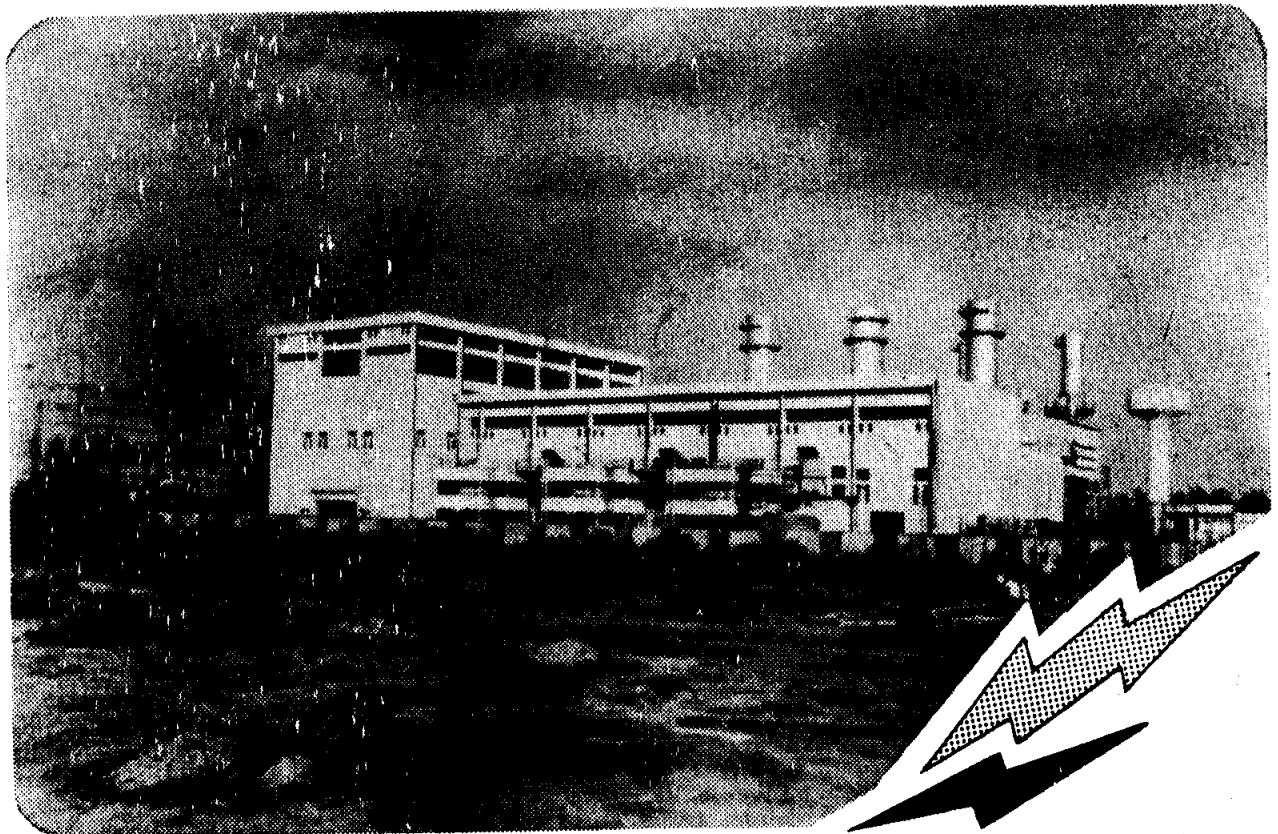
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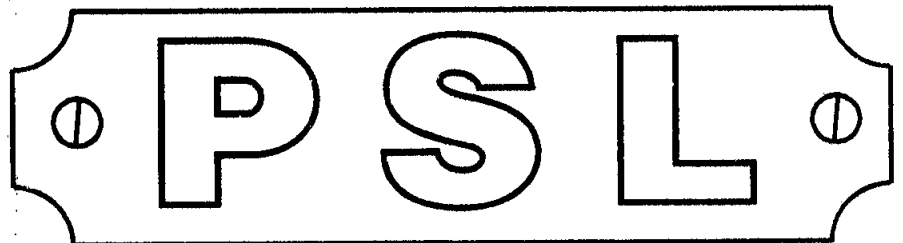
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